

maison avait fait voler a elle de tous les coins
 de 1'Alle-
 magne, de 1'Italie, et de la France; terres
 immenses du
 Nord, cites puissantes du Midi, venues se
 rejoindre et se
 composer en Guermantes et, perdant leur
 materialite, in-
 scrire allegoriquement leur donjon de sinope
 ou leur
 chateau d'argent dans son champ d'azur.'
 And again, of
 the Duchesse: 'Tous les chateaux des terres
 dont elle etait
 duchesse, princesse, vicomtesse, cette dame
 en fourrure
 bravant les mauvais temps me semblait les
 porter avec elle,
 comme des personnages sculptes au linteau
 d'un portail
 tiennent dans leur main la cathedrale qu'ils
 ont construite
 ou la cite qu'ils ont defendue. Mais ces
 chateaux, ces
 forets, les yeux de mon esprit seals pouvaient
 les voir dans
 la main gauche de la dame en fourrures,
 cousine du roi.
 * Ceux de mon corps n'y distinguaient, les
 jours ou le
 temps mena^ait, qu'un parapluie dont la
 duchesse ne
 craignait pas de s'armer.'

He who had begun as the spoilt young
 Alcibiades of
 this society became, in the end, its Timon.
 But he never
 ceased to be obsessed by it, even when he had
 seen through?
 it. Even at the close of his life he would rise
 from his
 sick-bed and venture out for the first time
 for weeks
 simply to see, for the sake of his book, how
 some Prince
 wore his monocle. That was rather pedantry
 than snob-
 bery (just as he tends to deliver interminable
 lectures on
 the etymology of place-names, or on sexual

abnormalities). But this preoccupation with the most trivial details about a rather trivial set of people grows at times exasperating. It remains perhaps fairest to say that this novel is a satire by an ex-snob. A writer who filled a large part of sixteen volumes with scathing satire of cricketers could hardly escape the charge of a somewhat excessive interest in cricket. Proust would have kept more sense of proportion about high society, had he not once been over-